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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR D, AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/SPG
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SUBJECT: Three Sudanese Gov't Workers Killed in Zalingei IDP Camp

1. (SBU) On July 20, IDPs in Hassa Hissa internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Zalingei (Sector 7) beat to death three government workers (Note: press coverage often referred to them as aid or humanitarian workers. End note.) The IDPs suspected Sudanese government Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) employees of poisoning water sources; the workers were actually conducting routine checks of chlorination levels of the water. A total of 15 WES, UNICEF, and INGO staff present were present at the time. Embassy Pol/Econ local staff reported press accounts offering a slightly different version of the story, wherein the employees were suspected of tampering with water supplies, and were killed after they refused to drink the water to demonstrate that it was safe. Distrust of government employees associated with local NGOs appears to underlie the violence; tensions remain high within the camp. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has suspended aid activities in Hassa Hissa, but has announced its readiness to resume services once security conditions permit.

2. (U) On July 25, the Office of the Spokesperson of UNMIS released a statement by Special Representative Pronk that condemned the killings and noted the effective partnership between the Water and Environment Sanitation agency and UNICEF in providing safe drinking water to conflict-affected persons in Darfur.

3. (SBU) In another incident, on July 22, IDPs in Kamasa Dagai IDP camp killed a teacher who was suspected of trying to poison a child with a vaccine. Also on July 22, a government police officer was beaten to death by IDPs in Hamadiya camp. Currently, there are no NGOs operational in any of these three Zalingei-area camps. UNICEF has reported the government may withdraw all WES staff from areas controlled by non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA).

STEINFELD